

History of Wasatch

Wild game was plentiful. A herd of 17 antelope skirting the edge of the settlement, a large bear that wandered right into town and was shot, a herd of elk who came down from the hills and were trapped in the snow and all killed by settlement hunters—these among the recollections of those first years in the valley.

The second winter of the settlement, 1860-61, was about the same as the first one. The following summer, their third, plowing began in April, and the amount of grain planted was doubled over the previous season. Families kept coming in from other settlements and were forced to build on city lots, the old fort by now being completely filled with dwellings.

Military District Organized

In September, 1861, officers came to Heber and organized it into a military district. J. W. Witt was appointed major and John Hamilton adjutant over the division of militia, with Thomas Todd captain of infantry.

"William M. Wall was a great hand for conducting sham fights, we had many a one in the middle of the fort, cavalry against infantry. I remember one time we were having a sham fight, the infantry was charging the cavalry when the horses got frightened and ran across the ditch, Charles Thomas' horse threw him and put his shoulder out of joint and he is still lame in that arm. There was no more sham fighting that day."

During the winter of 1861-62 a home drama association was formed, with Elisha Everett Sr. manager and John Hamilton, secretary. They used quilts and blankets for wings and scenery. Later they began building a stone hall in which to stage plays, but it was never finished because of friction which developed when some claimed they were building a theater before they built a house of worship. The company continued, however, and gave plays year after year.

"By 1862 our population had increased to near 1,000 souls. Midway had three small settlements. Quite a few families had settled on Center creek, some at Charles-

ton, some in Round Valley and some up at Hailstone."

Indian War Reaches Wasatch
The Black Hawk Indian war spread to Wasatch valley in 1866. The three settlements in the west side of the valley merged into one and the name of the town, Midway, resulted. They settled at the middle community and built a fort.

Although no white person was killed or wounded by Indians in this valley during the Black Hawk much stock was driven off, killed and stolen. The threat was always present and only constant vigilance and armed strength prevented blood shed. More than 250 men were organized into active military duty, in two companies of cavalry and four of infantry. William Wall's cavalry had several brushes with the Indians, and in one skirmish they killed two redskins and wounded several more. Raids on cattle and other stock continued through the summer of 1866 and most of 1867. In August of the latter year, the final peace treaty was signed which ended the war in this valley. It is commemorated by the monument on the stakehouse grounds.

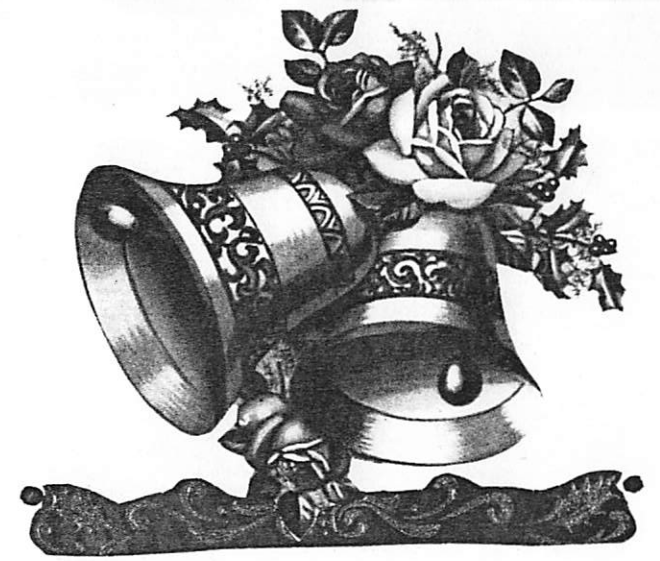
Wasatch county was officially created in 1862 by an act of the state legislature, bounded on the west by the summit of the Wasatch range, on the north by Summit county, on the east by the territorial line and on the south by Sanpete county. John W. Witt was the first probate judge.

The ending of Indian troubles in the valley removed the last serious obstacle to growth, and settlers flocked to the valley in the years that followed. In 1889, the Wasatch Wave was started under editorship of William Buys. Its first issue, on file in the Wave office, was dated March 23.

Heber City grew rapidly, having a population of around 2,000 in the first years of the twentieth century. A predominantly rural

population, with farming and livestock raising as the chief occupations, continued until the mines began to open and employ great numbers of men in the late 1920's. Since then, the mine payroll has been one of the largest and most important in the county. Wasatch county still remains a leading livestock center, however, with dairying making great strides in the past few years. Fine sheep are perhaps the county's best known product, an industry that has been built up from the first days of the valley's settlement.

Wasatch county stands today as one of the most prosperous regions in the state, with a diversified livelihood of mining, farming and stockraising.



Heber's First Christmas

One third of Heber's families could not get under the same roof for a banquet today, but they did in 1859 at the first Christmas ever observed here.

Six families out of a total of 17 attended a Christmas banquet prepared by Sarah, or "Mother" Lee, as she was known to everyone, according to John Crook's journal of early Heber history. Accommodations were small, and it was impossible to invite more. Those invited were Thomas Rasband, James and Bessie Carlile, Charles N. Carroll, John Jordan and Mr. Crook, with their families. The house in which the banquet

was held was built on the city lot owned by Ann Howarth, a log cabin about 16 feet square with a bowery on the south front.

The event is related in Mr. Crook's journal as follows:

"It was a beautiful day, the sun was shining clear and cold, some snow on the ground. Tables were set under the bowery outside. The menu consisted of ground cherry pudding, squash was brought from the lower valley. These were sweetened with beet or carrot syrup. There was no sugar to be had. There were other vegetables and good bread. All supplies were brought from the lower valley, as Brother John Lee did not raise any crop the first year.

"Christmas week was a gay time. After the banquet, a party of young folks arrived, some three or four sleigh loads from Provo City. Most of the young people, especially the boys had been in the valley in the summer

and had harvested some grain on Center Creek. There were gay times when they arrived, with dancing and amusements. About New Years they returned home. Then we were left with no mail and no visitors and clear, cold weather prevailed. Snow was about 18 inches deep."

In the same year that the 13 colonies revolted against English rule and signed the Declaration of Independence, the first white men traveled through Wasatch valley. At least, this is the earliest recorded date of any visit by white men through this region. Two Franciscan friars, Francisco Antansio Dominguez and Silvestre Velez de Escalante, the famed Father Escalante who explored Utah, started from Santa Fe for the purpose of discovering a direct route to Monterey, California, site of one of their largest missions. They began their journey in July, 1776.

According to descriptions of their journal, they passed through what is now Colorado. They crossed into what is now Utah near White river. The best interpretation of their journal claims they followed Green river for some distance, crossed over to the Duchesne river and followed probably what was the west fork, crossing the mountain at the head of Lake canyon and coming down through Wasatch valley and Provo river to Utah lake.

White trappers undoubtedly traversed the valley in later years, but it was not until 1858, less than a dozen years after the first Mormons came west, that permanent homes and settlers came to Wasatch valley.

This first settlement in 1858 was sparse, limited to less than half a dozen homes in the lower end of the valley. From the journal of John Crook, self-appointed historian and one of the first men ever to settle here, we learn that William M. Wall, George W. Bean, William Meeks, Aaron Daniels and others brought stock and grazed it in the summer of 1858, and also started the construction of ranch homes. Mr. Crook's journal says: "William M. Wall built a ranch at the south end of the valley, Father Decker bought the ranch later known as John Brown's home, Aaron Daniels built a ranch house about two miles north of Daniels, on what later became known as Meeks Bottoms. All of the above parties I think kept some stock through the winter in the valley."

The journal says Father Decker "bought" a place, which would lead one to believe he did not settle that first year of 1858 because there would have been no places to buy from anyone. Several old settlers agree that Wall Meeks and Daniels were the first men to build homes here. Mr.

Crook's journal does not make this point entirely clear, and there is little else written on the subject that could be considered authoritative.

While these ranchers were building homes in the summer and fall of 1858, two survey parties of Provo men, headed by J. C. Snow, visited the valley twice, one in July and once in October, and surveyed two tracts in the north and central portions of the valley, dividing them into 20 acre tracts and claiming all the surveyed plots. They did not sever the, however, returning to Utah valley that fall. It is recorded that ice froze half an inch thick in the tin water cups of the July surveying party one night. The party claimed over 100 tracts before summer's end.

Next year, in the spring of 1859 a group of Provo men, one of whom was Mr. Crook, started for Wasatch valley, then known as Provo valley, to settle there. The party included, besides Mr. Crook, Charles N. Carroll, Thomas Karband, John Jordan, John Carville St., James Carlile, Mr. Carpenter, whose first name was not designated, Jesse Bond, Henry Chawin and William Giles. On the last day of April they started for the valley, taking their wagons apart and carrying them piece by piece over a huge snowslide in Provo canyon. The next day they traveled to William Wall's ranch and reached it the first day of May, 1859.

Mr. Crook's journal of the trip continues:

"Early the next morning we crossed the river and after traveling for about two miles we arrived at Daniels' ranch, where we crossed the creek on ice. We journeyed on about a mile further to Meek's ranch, turned our teams out to feed and concluded to have breakfast. After breakfast was over, we started out on foot in a northerly direction to look out a suitable place for the location of our camp. We found it very difficult to cross Center Creek and Lake Creek because of the drifts of snow which lay in the willows along the banks. In a few hours we arrived at the plat of ground designated for a city; near the place were John M. Murdock's dwelling house now stands."

When Mr. Crook makes reference to the present tense, it should be remembered his account was

compiled and written from his journal for the first issues of the Wasatch Wave, in 1889, and it is from there this is taken.

First Soil Turned

"In looking north we saw two dark objects moving along; and after gazing intently for some time we saw that they were moving backwards and forwards. The idea struck us that it was some parties plowing; so off we started to fathom the problem; in drawing near to the objects we found our conjectures to be correct. The first man we reached was William Davidson, with two yoke of cattle and plowing, on the twenty acres of land now owned by John Turner in the north field. The other team of two yoke of cattle belonged to Robert Broadhead and James Davis. They were plowing on a piece of ground due east of William Davidson. On inquiry they told us they had been in the valley about two weeks; but on account of a big snow storm now plowing had been done until the day before, which was the first day of soil turned over with a plow in the valley. These parties had come from Salt Creek or Nephi, juab county."

From Mr. Crook's journal, it seems evident that William Wall, Aaron Daniels and William Meeks built the first ranch homes in 1858, and that William Davidson, Robert Broadhead and James Davis were the first farmers in the valley, coming about the middle of April and turning over the first land although Mr. Crook's party of 10 followed them by only two weeks.

Mr. Crook's journal continues: "They were plowing inside of the one and one-half mile square plat of land surveyed the preceding July. This plat of land being already claimed, and our party not feeling desirous of jumping any one's claim, concluded to examine further on up the river. We traveled on about half a mile and found the north line of stakes of said plat, and found some good land just north of it. So we went to work and staked off twenty acres each as near as could be ascertained by stepping off the ground, and concluded to commence plowing immediately. In looking around for a good camping place, we concluded to move our wagons next day, to what is now known as the London spring branch, or John Mc-

Donald's spring. After moving we built a large wickup of poles, covering it with willows, long wheat grass and dirt. I have known as many as 30 persons crowded in here of a night. Being a mammoth affair, it was christened the London wickup, hence the name London Spring. The moving and building occupied about two days, and I think on the fifth of May, Thomas Rasband and myself, having only one yoke of cattle each, joined our teams and commenced plowing."

The party of 10 was predominantly English, hence the name London creek and London spring. It runs today about two miles north of town. The area was also known as New London by many settlers.

Daughter Named Timpangos

The family of William Davidson was believed to be the first family to settle in the valley. His daughter which he named Timpangos after the mountain, was the first white child born in the valley.

About May 20 of the same summer the settlers arrived, 1859, some of the 10 men returned to Provo for grain and supplies, and were accompanied on their return by quite a number of new settlers, among them Thomas H. Giles, Hyrum Oaks, Martin Oaks, Sydney Epperson, and others.

About the last of May another party arrived. More land was surveyed, and parties came and went all summer long acquiring ground. Some stayed to settle, and the growth and development of Wasatch valley had begun. The townsite of Heber was surveyed this same summer.

An account is contained in Mr. Crook's journal.

"Sometime about the middle of June Deputy Surveyor Jesse Fullerton commenced to survey the plat of land that had been left for a town site, the starting point being George V. Clyde's corner. Charles N. Carroll and John and John Crook were chain bearers. The survey was run on the west line of Main street for eight blocks; thence west five and a half blocks; thence north eight blocks north to the north field line of survey.

"This section of land was staked off in blocks and lots at this time, the east part of the city some two months later. A forty line, forty rods square, was also laid off at this time. Some parties moved down on the fort line

immediately and commenced to build. John W. With, I think, put up the first house. Eliss Cox and John Hamilton were not far behind with his house. Others followed suit right along."

The fort was forty rods square, four rods being allowed for each family. William Davidson, one of the first three settlers, built his city lot on the block now occupied by the old tithing office.

Good crops of grain were raised that first summer in 1859, although some was lost in a September storm. Most of it was harvested, however. Jesse McCarroll and company brought the first threshing machine from Provo that fall. Settlement spread to the west side of the valley that summer also and farms were established near the mouth of Snake Creek. Peter Shirts began construction of a saw mill at the mouth of Snake Creek.

"There were," Mr. Crook wrote, 17 families in Heber the winter of 1859-60. There were also some families at Midway."

First Winter Uneventful

The settlers' first winter was uneventful, as far as major happenings were concerned. December was clear and cold, and every one hauled their wood from the canyons.

"Some boys and girls came up from Provo Christmas week on a visit and had a good time," Mr. Crook wrote. "When they returned we felt lonesome."

About 18 inches of snow lay on the ground that winter. During the winter months William Meeks and other men went up Center Creek canyon and brought out timber for sawmill. They began sawing in the fall of 1860, and Mr. Crook claims this was the first sawmill in the valley. Mr. Shirts later completed his mill at Snake Creek and was the second mill in operation.

"About the middle of March, 1860, a number of families arrived from Provo, among whom were Zerrra Palmer, T. G. Giles, George Giles, Frederick Giles, Jonathan Cleeg and others whom I do not much like pins and needles for the stubble was too bare feet."

and by the first of April there were about 40 teams plowing in the north field and Center Creek."

The second summer of the settlers' occupation of Wasatch valley, 1860, saw good fortune remain with them. Crops were good Oh! excuse me, I mean soles."

year, and ripened earlier in the season. The settlers built a double log house, 20 by 40 feet, with a dirt roof, which they used for a meeting house and school. It was completed enough to hold their Pioneer Day celebration. in it on July 24.

William Meeks, who has served as presiding elder until now, resigned in the fall of 1860 and William Wall was chosen to replace him. He was herding cattle in Round valley, later known as Walsburg, and came to Heber to accept the position. He chose James Laird and John M. Murdoch as his counselors.

"The north and west fields were now closed in nearly to the river by a five-foot worm fence, the south line being about 80 rods south of the present county road to Midway. There were about 4,000 acres in the fields," Mr. Crook wrote.

Fort Soon Filled

The fort lines were all filled up by the fall of 1860, with two families to the four rods formerly allotted one, in many instances. There were over 40 families in the fort line and a few had built on their city lots.

"In the summer and fall of 1859," the journal continues, "most all the freight teams enroute to Camp Floyd passed through this valley. As they passed by the teamsters would swap old wagon-covers, seamless sacks, etc., for the winter months William Meeks and other men went up Center Creek canyon and brought out us with about all the common wearing apparel we could get in those days, and men, though they were well dressed when they had convas suits, consisting of pants and jumper, made from an old wagon sheet. What boots and shoes we had, though boots were

nearly out of the question, were used to preserve, not in a mason's jar but under our arms until we got to the field, when we were glad to 'preserve' our feet in old Giles, Jesse Bond, Jonathan Cleeg and others whom I do not much like pins and needles for the stubble was too bare feet."

Historian Crook was not without a sense of humor, as proved by the following:

"When the soles of our shoes wore out Bro. Jonathan C. would make us some wooden bottoms. Oh! excuse me, I mean soles."

